

effective fire prevention and fire protection practices. It speaks well of every fire company, paid and volunteer, and for every individual member of these companies. It speaks well of the fire-prevention and fire-protection personnel of industrial plants, commercial enterprises and public institutions. It speaks well of our Fire Service Extension Department at the University of Maryland, which has performed so magnificently in training the firemen of our State in the techniques of fire fighting and in the methods of fire prevention. It is a clear and irrefutable indication that the efforts exerted by you, me, and all others who have concerned themselves with this problem have borne fruit. For we all know that the experts of the rating bureau have—and understandably so—but one criterion—*results*. If fire losses go up, rates inevitably rise correspondingly. Conversely, if fire losses drop, we may expect a comparable reduction in the rates.

We begin this conference, then, on a note of confidence. But let us not begin it with a sense of self-satisfaction. As we count our small blessings, the death toll from fires and the property destruction from fires loom before us with agonizing certainty.

Let us at this conference, then, go about our deliberations and our consultations with firm resolution to leave no stone unturned in our endeavor to safeguard the lives and the property of the people of Maryland against the hazards of fires.

Once again, let me express my sincere thanks to all of you for the interest you have shown in this worthy undertaking. I wish you success in your deliberations, and I hope your stay in Annapolis will be both profitable and enjoyable.